MULTIPLICITY

Screenplay by

Chris Miller & Mary Hale

A BLOB OF CHOCOLATE

extrudes from a machine and falls... then another... and another...

ROLL CREDITS

The blobs drop onto a conveyer belt, which speeds them off -- thousands of identical chocolate blobs.

A hand reaches in and deftly snatches one. Meet ARTIE LOGAN, V.P. Production, mid-thirties, likable, good-looking in a goofy sort of way. Covertly eating the candy, he surveys his surroundings.

ARTIE'S POV

A huge factory, going full blast. All sorts of chocolate candies are being poured, shaped, cooled, wrapped, bagged, and boxed, zipping this way and that on conveyer belts.

Workers in sanitary caps and gowns man their work stations, performing their tasks as automatically as the machines.

A red light lights and an alarm goes off as one of the machines malfunctions.

Artie heads unenthusiastically to deal with it.

THE MALFUNCTIONING MACHINE

A TECHNICIAN tells Artie what the problem is.

TECHNICIAN
The chocolate bears aren't coming out of their molds. They're stuck up there.

ARTIE
Did you try resetting the thermostat?

TECHNICIAN
Uh-huh.

Artie works controls. Nothing.

ARTIE
Did you try retensioning the pivot locks?

TECHNICIAN
No.

CONTINUED:

The technician tweaks the machine with a screwdriver. Nothing.

ARTIE
Did you try pounding the crap out of it?

Artie slams the machine with his fist several times. The bears fall out. The technician nods and Artie moves on.

ANOTHER WORK STATION

SNAKE, a long-haired, twentyish guy with tattoos and a hairnet is popping every third candy into his mouth. Artie rounds a corner, catches him in the act.

ARTIE
Snake! Are you eating the candy again?

SNAKE
(shakes his head)
Uh-uh.

ARTIE
Then what's that in your mouth?

SNAKE
(tight-lipped)
Nuffin'.

ARTIE
Yeah? Show me.

Snake smiles and opens up to reveal a gooey, disgusting mouthful of chocolate.

ARTIE
(wincing)
Yccchhh! Come on, Snake, gimme a break here, willya?

SNAKE
(swallowing)
Hey, Artie, you eat the candy!

ARTIE
I don't eat it. I sample it. It's a quality control thing. You think I like this stuff?

SNAKE
That's what I was doing, too -- sampling it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
Snake, please. I've got work to do.

Snake reluctantly puts the chocolate he was about to eat back on the conveyer belt.

ARTIE
(snatching it off)
Hey, you touched that. Where are your gloves?

SNAKE
I don't like the gloves.

ARTIE
Snake -- please?

With a sigh of exasperation, Snake pulls on a pair of disposable polythene gloves. Artie gratefully hurries off. The minute he's gone, Snake takes them off again.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICES - LATER

Artie crosses through a maze of partitioned work spaces to his private office and stops to confer with his secretary, KATHY. He eyes the FedEx COURIER waiting there.

ARTIE
Morning, Kathy. What have we got?

KATHY
Terry says the micronizer on 13's going crazy. The candy kisses look like goat turds.

ARTIE
Not much of a market for that. Better get that service guy from American Machine.

He starts for his office.

KATHY
And there's the new product meeting at three...

ARTIE
Oh, Jeez --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATHY
You did come up with ideas, didn't you?

ARTIE
Uh... how about "Chocolate Goat Turds?" No, huh? All right, I'm on it.

Again, he starts for his office.

KATHY
And we also have wholesale inventories, last month's production report, and you wanted me to remind you about the almond shipment.

ARTIE
What almond shipment?

KATHY
Exactly.

ARTIE
It's not here yet?

He notices the FedEx courier staring at him.

ARTIE
What's he waiting for?

COURIER
(sarcastic)
I'm waiting for world peace and universal understanding among all peoples.

Artie glowers at him.

KATHY
He's waiting for the General Foods contracts.

ARTIE
I gave them to you.

KATHY
(handing them to him)
I know. But it's customary to sign them.

ARTIE
Damn!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He goes in his office. Kathy follows with the contracts.

INT. ARTIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He slumps into a seat, starts signing the multiple copies.

KATHY
And Mr. Rotweiler's office called. He wants to see you at 5:45.

ARTIE
No! If I'm not out of here by six, Laura'll kill me. I swore I'd take her to dinner tonight.

He closes his eyes, breathes deeply.

KATHY
What should I tell him?

ARTIE
Tell him he's a worthless, fat-ass jerk and if I thought I had the slightest chance of landing another job I'd be out of here like a shot.

KATHY
(picking up the phone)
So you'll be there at 5:45?

ARTIE
Right.

CUT TO:

INT. ROTWEILER'S OFFICE

Artie sits with pad and pencil in his lap. Rotweiler reclines behind his desk in his plush leather chair.

ROTWEILER
Artie, when Unex bought Dandy Candies, we had a good reason.

ARTIE
I'm sure you did, Dick.

He's doodling dollar signs on the pad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROTWEILER
We wanted to be in the feel-good business. To make people's lives, especially children's lives, a little happier.

Artie's drawing a pile of doo-doo beneath a straining animal rump, wavy smell lines rising from it.

ROTWEILER
But for the dream to live, there'll have to be some changes. A trimmer ship sails better in an uncertain sea. Following me?

ARTIE
I don't sail, Dick.

ROTWEILER
It's a metaphor, Artie. The point is we've been assessing your division's performance --

Artie looks up apprehensively.

ROTWEILER
-- and we think you're ready for a move up.

ARTIE
Me? That's really flattering, but -- .

Artie hastily shuts the notebook as Rotweiler comes around to put a fatherly hand on his shoulder.

ROTWEILER
Artie, how would you feel about managing a new consolidated division?

ARTIE
(warily intrigued)
What did you have in mind, Dick?

ROTWEILER
(as if bestowing a great honor)
In addition to chocolates, you'd get pectin gels.

Artie just stares. This is not his dream come true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
Pectin gels? Those little red and green squeezy things? Isn't that Ron Henderson's department?

ROTWEILER
Mr. Henderson was terminated this morning, Artie. Trimmer ship...

ARTIE
(under his breath)
Man overboard.

ROTWEILER
How's that?

ARTIE
Nothing. Nothing.

ROTWEILER
So, what do you say?

ARTIE
It's a pretty big decision. Could I think it over?

ROTWEILER
Of course. But I feel I should tell you -- if you won't do it, I'll have to find someone who will. I'm really hoping you can get behind this and help us out here.

Artie sees which way the wind is blowing.

ARTIE
Dick, no problem. I can get behind this 100%. 105%! Pectin gels -- hell, yeah. When do I start?

ROTWEILER
Why don't we work up a game plan now? You can hit the ground running tomorrow.

Artie glances at his watch and sinks back into his chair.

ARTIE
I should probably call my wife and tell her the good news.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROTWEILER
By all means. I bet she'll be really excited.

ARTIE
Oh, she's gonna love it.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S HOUSE

Later. Artie and his sweet, pretty wife, LAURA, are in the kids' bathroom, trying to bathe JENNIFER, 6, and ZACH, 4, and get them ready for bed. Laura does not look happy.

ARTIE
You're angry with me, aren't you.

LAURA
I'm not angry.

ARTIE
I can tell when you're mad. Your face gets all squinched up.

LAURA
I'm not mad!

JENNIFER
Mommy, you sound mad.

LAURA
I'm disappointed, honey. That's different from mad. Sort of.

Artie lifts Zach out of the tub and starts drying him.

ARTIE
(to Laura)
They'd just fired Henderson! What was I supposed to say?

LAURA
Say "no." Say "my wife went back to work and I promised to help out more at home."

ARTIE
Oh, that'd go over great. Dick Rotweiler's famous for his sensitivity and compassion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZACH
Daddy, I'm disappointed, too.

ARTIE
Why are you disappointed?

ZACH
Life is so hard sometimes.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Artie's doing sit-ups in his skivvies. Laura's turning down the bedcovers.

ARTIE
Could you just admit you're mad so we can get past this and move on?

LAURA
I'm not mad, Artie.

ARTIE
Then what are you?

LAURA
(her eyes fill with tears)
Sad.

Stricken, Artie goes to her, puts his arms around her.

ARTIE
Don't be sad, honey. Please -- anything but sad.

LAURA
I never see you as it is.

ARTIE
You'll see me.

LAURA
And now that I'm working again, I was counting on your help.

ARTIE
I'll help. I promise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
While running two candy divisions? What about the kids? You going to wave to them on your way to meetings?

ARTIE
I'll still have weekends -- I think.

Artie takes a deep breath and ventures even deeper into total denial.

ARTIE
I know it seems overwhelming now, but we'll make it work. There'll be time for everything.

LAURA
Really?

ARTIE
Really.

He kisses her. She snuggles up.

LAURA
I just miss you so much.

ARTIE
I miss you, too.

They start making out in earnest. Abruptly, Artie pulls away.

LAURA
What's the matter?

ARTIE
I just remembered. I have to go to go to Boise tomorrow.

LAURA
Artie. Tomorrow is Saturday.

ARTIE
I know, but this is really important. A pectin gel conference.

LAURA
But you just said --

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
It's only for a day. The minute I get back, we'll figure this out. I promise.

He puts his arms back around her, trying to recapture the moment, but it's gone. Grabbing her pillow, she heads tearfully from the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOGAN HOUSE - MORNING

A nice house in a San Francisco suburb. Artie hurries out with his bag and attache case, Laura following.

LAURA
You're not having an affair, are you?

ARTIE
(throwing his stuff in the car)
When would I have time for an affair? When I'm not working like a dog, I'm with you and the kids.

LAURA
Does that mean you'd have an affair if you had the time?

ARTIE
If I had the time, I'd have an affair with you.
(they kiss)
I'll call you from Boise.

He gets in the car and drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY

Crowded. Dangerous. Crazy.

INT. CAR

Artie slips a cassette into the player. A plaintive doo-wop ballad plays -- the Heartbeats' Crazy for You.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The music soothes him. He sings along with the backup harmonies. He's not bad.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT

Teeming. Chaotic. Artie anxiously scrutinizes the "DEPARTURES" monitor, finds his gate number and takes off at a run.

INT. SECURITY GATES

Artie slams his attache case and suitcase onto the conveyer, and rushes through the electronic wicket. BZZZZ! He puts his keys and coins in the little tray. BZZZZ!

ARTIE
Look, I've got a metal plate in my head, okay? My flight's about to leave.

The dispassionate security person frisks him with the electronic wand and waves him on. Artie grabs the tray with his keys and change and takes off with it.

SECURITY PERSON
Hey!

INT. ENTRYWAY OF PLANE

The flight crew is just closing the door as Artie comes racing down the jetway.

ARTIE
Wait! I'm here!

They hold the door for him. A flight attendant looks at his boarding pass, shakes her head.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
I'm sorry, sir. We had to give your seat to a standby passenger.

ARTIE
Oh, no. Really?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Mm-hm. I'm afraid you'll just have to ride first class.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She grins at him. Artie can't believe his ears.

EXT. PLANE - DAY

It flies through a cloudless sky.

INT. PLANE - FIRST CLASS CABIN

Artie has his tray table down, graphs, charts, and pages of figures all around him, feverishly typing numbers into his notebook computer.

Watching with a half-smile is Artie's seat-mate, an extremely together, debonair MAN in his late forties. His clothes are perfect, his hair great. He could be Cary Grant in his mature prime.

A Flight Attendant appears.

ATTENDANT
Champagne?

ARTIE
No, I better not.

The Man takes two glasses, and hands one to Artie.

MAN
Why don't you?

Artie looks at him and reconsiders.

ARTIE
All right. Thanks.

MAN
Where you off to?

ARTIE
Boise. A symposium on pectin gels.

MAN
Oh. Sounds... interesting.

ARTIE
Yeah, right. You?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN
Sun Valley -- searching for some decent Spring skiing. I tried Cortina last week but the snow was lousy. Same with Vale and Crested Butte. And it's the wrong season for Innsbruck.

ARTIE
(impressed)
How much skiing do you do?

MAN
This year? About a hundred days.

ARTIE
A hundred days? What are you, an instructor?

MAN
Actually, I run an electronics firm. You know ComTech?

ARTIE
(amazed)
Of course, it's huge! We use your stuff all over the place. But how do you do it? I'd kill to ski even once a year.

MAN
It can be done. If you want it badly enough.

ARTIE
I want it <u>real</u> badly. But my job, my wife, my kids, all the crap I have to do around the house...

The debonair man laughs as the flight attendant refills their glasses.

MAN
I know it well. Your work eats up your life, but you can't stop because you have to keep up your life-style.

ARTIE
Right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN
You love your wife and kids, and you feel guilty because you're never around, so you give 'em every second you have left.

ARTIE
(sighs)
I'm a guilt machine.

MAN
Your whole life you've told yourself that any day now you'd finally start chasing your dreams -- learn French, read all of Dostoyevsky, fly a plane...

ARTIE
Sing in a rock 'n roll group.

MAN
We all have dreams. But only a few have desire. It comes down to that. Do you have enough desire to change your life?

He fishes in his briefcase for something.

ARTIE
(starting to feel the champagne)
You're the devil, right? You're getting a contract for me to sign in blood and then I get everything I want except one day the ground opens and this hairy hand grabs my ankle and pulls me down...

Chuckling, the man hands Artie the business card he came up with.

MAN
If you're serious about changing things, call this guy. He did it for me. And I've still got my soul.

ARTIE
A shrink?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN
Not exactly. Just go see him. Or not. As I said, it's a matter of desire. Cheers.

He toasts Artie, who's staring thoughtfully at the business card.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

At the front of the room hangs a banner reading "GEL-CON '94". Artie's seated before a guest speaker.

SPEAKER
Commercial pectins made from citrus peel and apple pomace are considered standard, but any industrial waste product of vegetable origin can be considered as potential raw material for pectin production....

Artie's a thousand miles away. Pulling the business card out of his pocket, he looks at it again.

INSERT

"JOSHUA LEEDS, M.D., Ph.D."

CUT TO:

INT. LEEDS' OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Behind the desk is DR. LEEDS -- in his forties, relaxed, sympathetic -- the sort of person who makes you feel better just by being there. Artie is unburdening himself.

ARTIE
...so this guy on the plane nailed it. Day in, day out, these endless demands on my time. If it's not the job, it's the family. If it's not the family, it's pay the bills, weed the garden, rotate the tires. And it'll never go away. Not until the kids grow up and Laura and I are wearing security pants.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE (Cont'd)
And then I'll die, and what will it all have been for? I mean, why am I alive?

DR. LEEDS
Artie, a wise man once told me to start each day by making a list of all the things I had to do, then pick the one that was just for me and do it first. You have to give yourself treats. Do you do that?

ARTIE
(thinks)
I got drunk with some friends one night.

DR. LEEDS
Good. When was that?

ARTIE
My junior year of college. I've never been able to do things for myself. I feel like I don't deserve them. I know exactly where it comes from, too -- my parents, the martyrs. They slept on twin crosses. It was like a contest to see who could suffer most without complaining. "Oh, just a heart attack, son. Can't go running to the emergency room for every little thing." I don't want to live like that.

DR. LEEDS
Nor should you. And I can help.

ARTIE
I don't have time for therapy.

DR. LEEDS
It only takes two hours.

ARTIE
(suspicious)
Two hours? What can you do in two hours?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. LEEDS
I can turn your life around. Increase your effectiveness at work, give you plenty of time for your family, and most importantly a lot of time for yourself. Of course, it's not cheap.

ARTIE
How much are we talking about?

DR. LEEDS
Fifty thousand dollars.

ARTIE
Fifty thousand dollars??

DR. LEEDS
That's less than psycholanalysis. Less than a new Mercedes.

ARTIE
But what is it? What am I buying?

Leeds hands him a legal form and pen.

DR. LEEDS
This affirms your understanding that what I'm about to show you is privileged, and that you'll maintain strict confidentiality regarding me, this clinic and our procedures.

Artie now thinks Leeds is either crazy or a total quack.

ARTIE
Sure. Okay.

He signs.

DR. LEEDS
Good.
(into the intercom)
Come on in.

The door opens and in walks an IDENTICAL TWIN to Dr. Leeds.

Artie does a double take. The Leeds chuckle.

DR. LEEDS
Artie, meet one of my associates -- Dr. Leeds.

CONTINUED:

Artie scrutinizes him as they shake hands, confused about what's going on.

SECOND LEEDS
I'm not his twin, if that's what you're thinking.

ARTIE
Could've fooled me.

ORIGINAL LEEDS
We're more than twins, Artie. We're clones.

A THIRD DOCTOR LEEDS enters.

LATEST LEEDS
Isn't science great?

The three Leeds smile benignly as the stunned Artie considers the possibilities.

CUT TO:

INT. REPLICATION ROOM

A spacious, hi-tech laboratory. A control panel, manned by several Dr. Leeds clones.

Artie, in one of those backless hospital gowns, peers around apprehensively as Leeds guides him to what looks like an outsized relative of an MRI machine. Trying to retain his modesty by holding the gown together, he climbs into it.

ARTIE
Is it going to hurt?

DR. LEEDS
Not in the least. Relax.

ARTIE
I'm relaxed. Don't I look relaxed?

DR. LEEDS
Here, this'll help.

He gives Artie a shot. Artie immediately drifts off, a big smile on his face. Leeds signals one of the clones.

The clone pushes buttons. The cloning machinery begins to operate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On monitors, snippets of Artie's life fly by: a giant breast coming at him, hands changing his diaper, a teddy bear, a bicycle (as it crashes into a tree), a pitch in Little League...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB - LATER

Artie's trying to wake up.

DR. LEEDS (O.S.)
Mr. Logan! Can you hear me?

ARTIE
(holding his head)
Ohhhhh. What happened?

Dr. Leeds helps him sit.

DR. LEEDS
Everything went fine.

Artie spots a second Artie, behind Leeds, staring at him.

ARTIE
(gulps)
Is that it?

DR. LEEDS
Well, actually, you're it.

CLONE
(stunned)
I'm the clone?

The original Artie's eyeing his double uncomfortably.

ARTIE
Isn't he a little on the heavy side?

DR. LEEDS
Sorry, Mr. Logan. Exact duplicate.

ARTIE
But the hairline. I know that's not right.

CLONE
You're sure I'm the clone? It couldn't be a mistake?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's hard to tell which Artie is the more dismayed.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Artie and his new twin head for the car. Both reach to open the driver's door. The clone looks rueful, and heads around to the other door.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Artie and the clone ride along stealing sidelong glances at each other.

BOTH ARTIES
Well...

They laugh nervously.

ARTIE
This is hard to believe.

CLONE
Try it from this end.

ARTIE
But is this for real? You're me?

CLONE
Try me.

Artie thinks for a moment.

ARTIE
What'd we do for our ninth birthday?

The clone smiles at the memory.

CLONE
Mom took us and our friends to see Oliver. Tubby Schoonmacher ate so much candy he threw up.

ARTIE
Jesus, that's right. All over Paula Silver.

They laugh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLONE
Remember our first date?

ARTIE
Charlene?

CLONE
Yeah, Charlene. She let us feel her up behind the Coke machine at the dance.

ARTIE
Wow...

Artie and the clone wear exactly the same expression of nostalgic pleasure.

ARTIE
And then later she said...

BOTH
(falsetto)
"I feel dirty! I feel dirty!"

They crack up.

CLONE
You know, this isn't so bad. If you don't mind having another person knowing the most intimate details of your life.

ARTIE
(uncomfortable)
Uh... so, of course, you know my plan.

CLONE
Sure -- we specialize. I take work, you take the family.

ARTIE
Giving both of us twice the time we used to have. Cool, huh?

CLONE
Except I get to live on top of a garage.

ARTIE
No more watching Zach eat. No more Masterpiece Theatre.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLONE
Mmmmm...

ARTIE
Watch the ballgame in your underwear. Listen to James Brown any time you like. Leave the toilet seat up.

CLONE
Sold.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT

as the two come walking in and turn on the lights. The place is potentially not bad, but at the moment very sparsely furnished. Bed, kitchenette...

ARTIE
Okay, look, uh...
(realizes he doesn't know what to call him)
What am I going to call you?

CLONE
What do you mean? I'm Artie.

ARTIE
No, I'm Artie. I know -- "Two." From now on, you're Two.

TWO
Two? A number? What is this -- the Gulag?

ARTIE
There's food in the refrigerator.
(turning on TV)
I got the cable hooked up -- there's a great show on salamanders tonight...

CLONE
I know, I know. I was you when you did it, remember?

ARTIE
Well, guess I better check in...

He starts out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO
Artie? The machine didn't clone your contact lenses. CNN here looks like animated Monet.

ARTIE
(reaching in his attache case)
Here, take my glasses.

He tosses them to Two and starts out again.

TWO
And I'll need a few other things.

ARTIE
Oh, there's toothpaste and a razor in the --

TWO
A computer, a sound system, a VCR, my own phone with call-waiting, a stairwalker, an espresso maker...

Artie listens in growing dismay.

TWO
I'll make a list. And leave the attache case. I'm supposed to hit the ground running tomorrow, remember?

Putting the glasses on, he goes to the rickety dining table, takes stuff from the case and spreads it out. Artie, ignored, departs.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S HOUSE

Morning. Artie and Laura slurp down coffee. The kids grab their things as the family, running behind as usual, hurries out the door.

EXT. ARTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

By the open garage door, they kiss.

LAURA
Love you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
Me, too.

Laura and the kids get in her car. Looking down to put key in ignition, she just misses seeing Two come jauntily down the stairs.

Artie makes desperate waving motions, and the clone flings himself out of sight just as Laura looks up again. She waves goodby to Artie and backs down the driveway. Artie weakly waves back.

INT. CAR - DAY

as they cross the Oakland Bay Bridge. Two's wearing one of Artie's suits. Artie, driving, looks worriedly at him.

ARTIE
You're okay about everything?

TWO
Sure.

ARTIE
Anything I can do to help...

TWO
None needed, thanks.

ARTIE
There'll be a lot of pressure. New management, new division...

TWO
Good, I like pressure.

ARTIE
You do?

They drive in silence a moment.

ARTIE
(suddenly)
What's our boss's name?

TWO
(amused)
What are you, my KGB trainer? Look, Artie, I'm you. What you know, I know. Our boss's name is Dick. Our secretary's name is Kathy.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO (Cont'd)
Sometimes you excuse yourself in the middle of meetings to go to the bathroom and pick your nose.

ARTIE
Hey!

TWO
So just stop worrying, okay? I can handle this.

ARTIE
Yeah, but I'm not sure I can.

TWO
(musing)
I'll start with a divisional meeting. I'll assign purchasing to Ted and marketing to Linda. Bernie'll ride herd on production. That leaves me free for long-term planning.

Artie's listening in growing alarm.

ARTIE
Long term planning? What long term planning?

TWO
A few innovations I have in mind. Nothing to concern you

But Artie is concerned.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S OFFICE

Two is doing three things at once. Kathy sticks her head in.

KATHY
Don't forget -- lunch with Mr. Rotweiler at --

TWO
I already made reservations.

KATHY
You made reservations?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO
Mm-hm.

He continues his high-energy exertions as she looks at him uncertainly. Hearing the phone RING, she goes out to answer it.

KATHY'S OFFICE

KATHY
Mr. Logan's office.

EXT. GAS STATION - PAY PHONE - DAY

ARTIE
Kathy?

KATHY

looks in Artie's office. Two's busy at the computer, nowhere near a phone.

KATHY
(confused)
Who is this, please?

EXT. GAS STATION - PAY PHONE

ARTIE
It's me. Uh...
(in a deeper voice)
...Ted, in cocoa.
(as a car HONKS)
We're testing the new honkometer down here. Mr. Logan around?

KATHY'S OFFICE

KATHY
Just a minute.

She covers the earpiece.

KATHY
Artie? There's someone on 3.

ARTIE'S OFFICE

Two picks up.

TWO
Logan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INTERCUT CONVERSATION

ARTIE
Hi. It's me.

TWO
Me? Who's me?

ARTIE
Uh...Artie?

TWO
Yes?

ARTIE
No, this is Artie.

TWO
Artie? You dropped me off ten minutes ago. What do you want?

ARTIE
Just thought I'd check in and see how things are going. Soooo... how're they going?

TWO
Artie, ever hear the term "backseat driver?"

ARTIE
I'm just trying to help.

TWO
Then leave me alone. Stop worrying. Relax.

ARTIE
I am relaxed.

A dog BARKS. He jumps.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT

Crowded with executives eating lunch. Two and Rotweiler are at a table.

ROTWEILER
Now that you're top management, you'll need to know the main players at Corporate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the next table, a person with dark sunglasses and a moustache seems to be eavesdropping.

TWO
That'd be Harvey Lowenstein, Chairman... Chuck Wright, C.E.O... President Ted Seip...

We realize the person in sunglasses is Artie! He's mouthing the names along with Two, willing him to get them right.

Rotweiler's surprised and pleased at Two's knowledge.

ROTWEILER
And don't forget Robin Jensen.

Artie's brow furrows. Robin Jensen?

TWO
Of course, the rising star. BA Dartmouth, MBA Harvard... I thought Robin's piece in Forbes on interlocking business practices was exceptional.

Artie gapes.

ROTWEILER
I see you've done your homework. Good. Okay, Corporate's giving us three months to run with the ball, and then Robin'll be out to look things over.

Two is staring curiously at the diner in sunglasses at the next table. Seeing himself scrutinized, Artie hunches face down over his soup, eating like Quasimodo.

ROTWEILER
The word from the top is that our number one priority will be debt reduction. All divisions'll need to cut overhead by 20%.

Two nods.

The shocked Artie's spoon falls in his soup, splattering him.

ROTWEILER
It's the usual routine -- terminate half your hourly workers and demand twice as much from the rest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Artie's jaw clenches. He starts to get up.

Seeing this, the Clone jumps to his feet.

TWO
Ah, just have to hit the head, Dick...

He moves off, hooking Artie's arm, speeding him away.

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM

TWO
Now what the hell's going on here? Jesus, take that thing off -- you look like a used car salesman.

Sheepishly, Artie takes off the moustache.

ARTIE
I was just in the neighborhood and thought if you needed help...

TWO
Artie, you need help. I'm fine.

ARTIE
But you can't just fire people and squeeze twice as much out of the rest. Sweatshops have been outlawed.

TWO
Artie? Number one rule of getting ahead in business? Continue to be employed.

ARTIE
Well, yeah, but -- .

TWO
So be cool. I'm rolling.

ARTIE
Okay. You're right. I'll be cool.

They start out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
Oh, if he brings up scheduling...

TWO
Artie, get a life.

CUT TO:

INT. LOGANS' HOUSE

Laura and the kids are playing Children's Monopoly as Artie bursts in.

ARTIE
Hi, everyone!

Only Laura looks up.

LAURA
What are you doing home?
(alarmed)
Is everything okay?

ARTIE
Everything's great. Just taking some time off.

LAURA
On the first day of your new job? How'd you manage that?

ARTIE
I delegated. Hi, kids!

They don't even look up.

ZACH
(to Jennifer, pointing)
What's that say?

JENNIFER
"Go to jail. Go directly to--"

ZACH
Not again!

LAURA
I'll trade you my Get Out of Jail Free card for Illinois Avenue...

Artie's plaintive -- no one's paying any attention to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
Uh... anyone want to go to the park for popsicles?

In a flash, the kids are on their feet.

KIDS
Hi, Dad! Where'd you come from?
Hey, Mom, Dad's home!

ARTIE
(to Laura)
And honey? I'll cook tonight.

Laura does a take.

JENNIFER
(as they head out)
Daddy, you know how to cook?

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND

Artie's helping Jennifer across the monkey bars.

ARTIE
Good, Jenny. One hand after the other. Isn't this fun? Now put some swing into it.

Jenny puts some swing into it... and kicks Artie in the face.

ARTIE
Agh! Jenny, for Christ's sake!

JENNIFER
Okay, Daddy, we're coming to the end now...

Artie holds his nose in pain. Zachary comes rushing up with a mildly scraped elbow.

ZACH
Daddy, I got a boo-boo!

ARTIE
(half-hearing)
Boo-boo, huh? Interesting.

ZACH
Instressting?? It hurts! I might need surgery!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
What?

Finally registering what his son is saying, he lets go of Jennifer to look at Zach's elbow... just as Jennifer lets go of the last monkey bar.

JENNIFER
Daddy, no!

She tumbles to the ground. Now both kids are crying.

JENNIFER
Daddy, you're supposed to catch me. Mommy always catches me.

ZACH
(staring at his wound in horror)
Daddy, get the proxide! Before it gets affected!

ARTIE
Look, kids, sometimes in life you have to face challenges. You have to be brave soliers and --

THE KIDS
WAHHHHHHHHHH...!

Artie's approaching meltdown.

INT. LOGAN'S HOUSE

The bedraggled expedition returns. The kids' faces are red and green with popsicle stain. Artie's twitching, hollow-eyed.

ZACHARY
Did not!

JENNIFER
Did too!

ZACHARY
I hate you!

JENNIFER
I hate you more!

ZACHARY
I infinity hate you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
All right! Stop!
(calling)
Laura!

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

A mess, as a tired, stressed-out Artie struggles to make dinner. He puts brocolli florettes in a steamer basket, then grabs his steamer pot -- only to find it FULL OF SLITHERING WORMS.

ARTIE
YAH!

Laura comes rushing in.

LAURA
What's the matter? Are you okay?

Artie points to the worms, speechless. Laura laughs.

LAURA
Silkworms.

ARTIE
In my pot?

LAURA
It's our science project at school. They're going to turn into moths.

ARTIE
But this is my pot.

LAURA
Allow me to offer a clever solution: Use a different pot.

The martyred Artie long-sufferingly runs water in the pasta cooker.

LAURA
Artie? Thanks for making dinner.

She smiles at him. Wanly, he smiles back.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM

Candles. Wine. Brazilian music. Artie sets food on the table.

ARTIE
Laura!

LAURA (O.S.)
Right down!

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME - LATER

The candles are lower. Artie's still waiting. Laura enters.

LAURA
I'm sorry, honey. Zach had to go poop, he didn't quite make the bathroom, and, oh God, he was just covered with it, I practically had to clean him off with a squeegee--

ARTIE
Laura, okay, I get the idea.

She sits. Artie pours wine and raises his glass.

ARTIE
Here's to us.

LAURA
And hopefully the time to enjoy us.

They clink glasses... sip... their eyes meet...

ZACH
WAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Artie jumps, wine spills. Zach is standing there, crying.

ARTIE
Zachary. My life just passed before my eyes.

ZACH
I skeered, Daddy.

ARTIE
Skeered? Skeered of what?

ZACH
The interest rate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
Will you do the honors this time?

ARTIE
Ah... I should probably keep the food warm...

Laura, displeased but resigned, scoops Zach up and exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE CANDLES

Lower still. Laura comes in, finds Artie nodding out. She taps a fork against her wine glass. Artie wakes with a little cry.

ARTIE
I dreamed I was being absorbed by a giant pectin gel.

LAURA
Artie, we need to talk.

ARTIE
We do? Now? Fine. No problem.

He tries to look attentive through half-open eyes.

LAURA
I've been meaning to bring this up for a while. And now that I'm back teaching again, I'm very, very concerned about the way things are... Artie?

ARTIE
Right here. Wide awake.

LAURA
Honey, I appreciate the effort you're putting out, I really do. But it's just not going to work.

ARTIE
Sure it will. Look at today -- office, kids, dinner. And I'm fine.

He attempts to take a mouthful of soup with his fork.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
Artie, our life has to change. I can't manage everything at home by myself anymore -- I have to have your help. And look at you -- after one day, you need a week at a spa.

ARTIE
We're in a period of adjustment. I'll be up to speed soon.

LAURA
It won't work, Artie.

ARTIE
Of course it'll work. Why won't it work?

LAURA
Okay, Jennifer needs new socks. What do you do?

ARTIE
Hey, give me something tough here.

LAURA
What's her size?

ARTIE
Her size?

LAURA
Her sock size. What's her sock size?

ARTIE
Uh..."petite?"

LAURA
No. Now what?

ARTIE
I get the guy at the store to measure her.

LAURA
Artie, there are no guys at stores who measure people for socks. You have to <u>know</u> her size.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
But socks are like condoms, aren't they? One size fits all?

LAURA
No. Children's socks are the same size as their shoe size.

ARTIE
Well, there you go. I'll get socks that are her shoe size.

LAURA
What's her shoe size?

ARTIE
Uh...

LAURA
I rest my case.

ARTIE
I'll learn.

LAURA
When? Artie, face it -- you just can't do it.

Artie stares at her with an expression that silently acknowledges she's probably right.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT

The things Two requested earlier are in place -- the phone, VCR, etc.

Two is watching a ballgame.

TWO
Slide! Spike the son of a bitch!

The runner's out at the plate.

TWO
Ah, you wimp.

He crumples his Miller Lite can and tosses it in the trash.

ARTIE (O.S.)
Two?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO
Hah?

Clicking off the TV, he turns... and gapes.

It's Artie -- with another clone!

ARTIE
Meet Three.

TWO
Three?

ARTIE
Didn't want you to be lonely.....

TWO
Lonely? I'm not lonely. Who said I was lonely?

ARTIE
Oh, come on, everyone needs a little company. Someone to not relate to while watching TV.

TWO
But I don't want a roommate. He'll make noise. I'll have to see his armpits. And for what? What do we need him for?

Three's watching this conversation like a tennis match.

ARTIE
Three will be performing some very critical tasks here on the home front.

TWO
Such as.

ARTIE
Such as spending time with Laura, playing with the kids, buying them socks...

THREE
Buying socks?

ARTIE
Extremely important parenting skill.

Two shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO
You're amazing. So while he's here, and I'm at work, just what are you going to be doing?

ARTIE
(shifty)
Uh... important things.

SERIES OF SHOTS - M.O.S.

To the Booker T. version of Groovin', we watch Artie:

1. Looking through 45's at a dusty old record shop.

2. Having coffee at an outdoor cafe, reading a crime paperback.

3. Strolling in Golden Gate Park.

4. Taking in an Oakland A's game.

5. Picking up on some sounds at a jazz club.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARTIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Artie's car pulls up. He hops out, whistling.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He brushes his teeth.

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

He swings the bedroom door silently open... and reacts in dismay.

One of the Clones is asleep next to Laura!

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The shocked Artie disappears from the doorway, reappears with Laura's cotton balls and throws one at the clone. No response. He tries another.

It hits Laura! As her eyelids flicker, he zips out of sight. Beat. He peers back in. She's asleep again. Whew!

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

He has an idea. Getting a broom from the closet, he pokes the clone with the handle.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The clone wakes. Seeing Artie, he reacts -- oh, shit!

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

as Artie and the Clone come in.

THREE
Look, I can explain.

ARTIE
This ought to be good.

THREE
We were watching TV, and Laura said "Let's go to bed." What was I supposed to say, "Good night, honey, thought I'd sack out on the sofa tonight?"

ARTIE
You're not supposed to say "honey" at all. And what's that mean, "go to bed?"

Two wakes up. Blearily, he puts on his glasses.

THREE
What do you mean, what does it mean?

ARTIE
I mean it better not mean what I think it means.

THREE
If you mean what I think you mean, you need therapy.

TWO
Somebody better mean something soon around here. I'm trying to sleep.

Three throws Two an annoyed look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
All right, let's stop pussyfooting around: Did you?

THREE
Did I what?

ARTIE
You know what.

Now it's Two watching a conversation like a tennis match.

TWO
But I don't know what. What?

THREE
(to Two)
Do you mind?
(to Artie)
What?

ARTIE
Screw my wife!

TWO
Wow!
(to Three)
Did you?

THREE
(with dignity)
I wouldn't have "screwed" Laura. I'd have "made love" to her.

TWO
Well, whoop-de-doo!

ARTIE
Just answer the question.

TWO
Yeah, answer the question.

Three throws Two a murderous look, then replies to Artie.

THREE
Of course I didn't. We merely got into bed at the same time. I was going to go downstairs when she fell asleep, but I must have dozed off.

Two snorts with cynical laughter.

CONTINUED:

THREE
(to Artie)
Hey, maybe you enjoy hanging out with Bluto here, but this is not my idea of a good time. I want a separate room.

ARTIE
I spend a hundred grand to simplify my life and it only gets more complicated. Damn it, you two, shape up. Learn to get along with each other. You're main concern should be doing your jobs with dedication and efficiency.

TWO
Oh, like you, huh?

ARTIE
That's right. I'm only asking from you what I ask from myself.

The clones try to keep straight faces, but wind up dissolving into sniggers. With a look of injured dignity, Artie stomps out.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARTIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

The sun's just peeking over the hills.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A quiet little wind-up travel alarm clock goes off. It's sufficient to wake Artie without waking Laura. Getting his clothes, he pads from the room.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S HOUSE

Later. Artie's watching something from concealment.

It's Laura, the kids, and Three, in a happy mood at the breakfast table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THREE
All right, this one I devised as a desperate ploy to keep the Poobah of Hindustan from cutting off my nose.

He balances a spoon on his nose, to the delight of Laura and the kids.

Artie can't help but smile.

ARTIE
God, I forgot I knew how to do that...

Zach and Jennifer are all over Three.

THE KIDS
Daddy, teach us, teach us!

LAURA
I'm sure Daddy would love to teach you, but right now he has to go to work.

The kids' faces fall, especially Zach's. In fact, it's a look we've seen before -- right before Zach erupted into uncontrollable tears at the park.

THREE
Of course you're mother's right, but I do think we have time for Lesson Number One.

Zach cheers up.

THREE
Okay, here it is: Putting the Spoon on Your Nose.

He demonstrates, and both Jenny and Zach attempt to emulate him. Jennifer actually succeeds for a second. But Zach's spoon immediately clangs to the floor.

ZACH
(tears welling)
I can't do it. I'm a terrible person.

Artie braces himself -- here it comes.

But Three merely enfolds Zach in a comforting hug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THREE
No, no, little boy, you're a wonderful person. You got the most important part of the lesson down perfectly.

ZACH
I did?

ARTIE
Yes. You found your nose.

He offers a high five, and the smiling boy slaps it.

ZACH
You're the best daddy in the whole world.

Artie is deeply impressed with the clone's performance. And perhaps a little jealous.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A little later. Artie ducks behind something as the family comes out. Laura puckers for a kiss, but Three nervously shakes her hand instead and heads for his car.

Artie's pleased. Now he watches as Three, seeing Laura drive off with the kids, goes into the garage, handing off the attache case to Two, who's coming out. Two drives off in Artie's car.

Artie steps from hiding, elated.

ARTIE
It works. I can do anything I want.
(thinks)
What do I want?

EXT. HILLY AREA - DAY

Artie tries dirt biking. He wipes out.

CUT TO:

INT. WOOD SHOP

In a crafts class, Artie puts the finishing touches on a bird house. It falls apart.

CUT TO:

INT. CANDY FACTORY

Two's walking through the same part of the factory where we first met Artie. He stops by Snake.

TWO
Snake, you're not wearing your gloves again.

SNAKE
How many times I gotta tell you, Artie -- they make my hands sweaty.

TWO
You know what else makes hands sweaty? Unemployment. Wear the gloves.

This is a new Artie, and Snake's impressed. He quickly puts his gloves on.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Mr. Rotweiler, looking on, nods approval.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Artie, sitting in an overstuffed chair, has dozed off over a copy of War and Peace.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - DAY

The clones' dorm is begining to take on personality. Two's part is spartan, compulsively neat and clean. Three's is casually elegant with a lived-in look and a Leonard Cohen poster.

Three is just making himself comfortable with a Gourmet magazine when there's an EXPLOSION.

INT. ARTIE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Three busts in to find the hot water heater gushing water all over the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THREE
Hey, this isn't my job!

SAME - LATER

A PLUMBER is working on the water heater as Three paces, looking at his watch. The doorbell rings.

FRONT DOOR

Three opens the door to find a FIREMAN.

FIREMAN
You have 48 hours to clear your brush or there's a $500 fine.

THREE
Could you come back later? I don't get involved with that.

FIREMAN
It is the responsibility of all citizens to practice fire hygiene in the areas and environs adjacent to but not more than fifty feet from their homes, properties and owned possesions, by extension to include fences, driveways, garages, frog ponds...

Three listens, appalled.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

A depressed Artie walks along. Attracted by the colorful displays in the window of a dive shop, he stops to look.

One poster transfixes him: A diver surrounded by underwater beauty so great it's almost surreal.

ARTIE
(softly)
Wow....

CUT TO:

INT. DIVE CLASSROOM

Artie sits with a dozen Dive Students, all much younger than him. The cool dive instructor, TOM, is more Artie's age. He has sunstreaked hair, an earring, and a great tan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
Hi. My name's Tom and I can talk about it now -- I was an accountant.

Artie reacts.

TOM
But I discovered diving and quit, and now I've gotten every certification you can think of. I've dived pirate galleons, the mid-Pacific trench, the craters of volcanos. It's the greatest thing I've ever done. But don't believe me, man, ask Jerry Garcia -- it's what he does these days instead of LSD.

The class laughs.

TOM
And you know why Jerry and me feel that way? Because it is so incredibly, unbelievably beautiful down there. I just said to myself one day "That's it. No more numbers in neat columns. From now on, I'm surrounding myself with nothing but peace and beauty."

Artie's transfixed.

TOM
But tell me about yourselves. What brings you to my class, ah...?

He's pointing to Artie. Artie snaps to.

ARTIE
Artie. Well, I'm searching for... I'm not sure what I'm searching for. Something that makes me feel like more than just one tiny, little part of some huge machine. Something for me.

TOM
Ah....midlife crisis, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Artie only joins weakly in the general laughter -- Tom's hit too close to home.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWIMMING POOL -- DAY

A little later. Tom's got the class out by the pool in their swim suits.

TOM
Now diving is basically easy, fun, and safe. I'm still here, right? But there's one thing you need to remember -- keep breathing. Don't hold your breath.

Artie raises his hand.

ARTIE
What happens if you hold your breath?

Tom begins inflating a balloon on an air tank next to him.

TOM
Okay, Artie, pretend this is your lungs. If you don't breathe while coming up, the decreasing pressure's going to expand the air in them until...

The balloon EXPLODES.

Artie's eyes widen.

TOM
And, boy, does that make a mess! So save me work and keep breathing, okay? Way cool.

He makes the "way cool" hand signal. The class makes it back to him.

THE CLASS
Way cool.

TOM
All right, let's get wet.

They begin diving in, Artie not moving as quickly as the others.

EXT. ARTIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Artie pulls up. It's late -- the house is dark. The garage apartment is lit, though, and some guy's just coming out.

Curious, Artie walks over. The guy's wearing a Domino's Pizza cap.

PIZZA MAN
Hey, you look just like those guys upstairs!

ARTIE
Isn't that amazing? Can I do something for you?

PIZZA MAN
Nah, they already paid me.
(winks slyly)
Some babes.

ARTIE
Babes?

He plunges inside.

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT

The lights are low. Honky-Tonk Women is playing. Hearing drunken laughter, Artie starts forward with determination.

VOICES (O.S.)
Two pair. That beats me. Three ladies. And I have a flush. Marla, you lose again. Oh, well, easy on, easy off.

A woman's blouse hits Artie in the face. Tearing it off, he comes into the room... and stops in his tracks.

The Clones and two young women are playing STRIP POKER. The four are in various stages of undress, taking hits from mixed drinks.

ARTIE
All right, what the hell is this?

The Clones freeze guiltily. The women look at him in surprise.

WOMAN 1
(recovering first)
There's more of you? This keeps getting better. Have a drink, honey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
I don't want a drink.

THREE
Ah, Tiffany, Marla, this is Artie.

Artie puts his hands on his hips and regards the sheepish Two and Three.

THREE
(pointing at Two)
It was all his idea.

TWO
Oh, great, Three. Stand by your buddy. Remind me to depend on you in time of war.

ARTIE
Put a sock in it, you two.
(to the women)
Okay, ladies, let's call it a night.

Two turns on Artie.

TWO
What are you talking about?

ARTIE
Party's over.

The others AD LIB objections. Two stands and goes face to face with Artie.

TWO
Let's look at this another way. Right now, you have two options: Grab a beer or split.

ARTIE
Oh, is that right?

He comes at Two. Three jumps between them.

THREE
Girls, I guess we'd better take a rain check. Sorry.

MARLA
What a pity. This could have been amazing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She flirtaceously hands Artie her coat. Embarrassed, he quickly helps her put it on.

TIFFANY
Bye, now.

MARLA
(winking at Artie)
Keep it warm for Mama.

They go out. Artie regards the clones severely.

TWO
Hey, what are we supposed to be, monks?

THREE
This isn't exactly what we'd prefer, Artie. But there's only one wife and apparently you don't want to share her.

ARTIE
I guess to hell I don't.

TWO
So what are we supposed to do? We're running out of cold water up here.

Artie can't ignore the validity of their point.

ARTIE
All right, look, we'll figure something out.

TWO
Good.

He lights up a cigarette.

ARTIE
You're smoking?

TWO
You got a problem with that, too?

ARTIE
I spent a fortune quitting!

Artie tries to get the cigarette away from Two, as Three tries to keep them apart. A TOILET FLUSH causes all three to stop and look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A fourth Artie steps out of the bathroom!

FOUR
Hi.

Artie's incredulous.

ARTIE
What's this?

TWO
Take a wild guess.

ARTIE
You went and got another clone without asking me?!

TWO
(pointing at Three)
It was all his idea.

THREE
Hey!

TWO
Quid pro quo.

ARTIE
(to Three)
But why would you do such a thing?

THREE
Because I need help. There's too much work around here. My job's Laura and the kids, not clearing brush.

TWO
He might get his little fingernails dirty.

THREE
Look, you asshole, just shut up, okay?

ARTIE
Both of you shut up! Don't we have enough trouble without...?

Artie breaks off in astonishment as Four, pretending to be a jet fighter, takes off. He roars around the room, firing his machine guns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Artie turns to Two and Three in utter bewilderment. They exchange uncomfortable looks.

THREE
You see, there was a slight problem.

ARTIE
Problem?

THREE
Yes. I, uh, told Leeds I was you. So there was no reason for him to warn me that when you clone a clone, things come out a little... funny. And Four... came out a little funny.

Four drops his bombs in a waste basket, then kicks it with a great explosion noise. Papers fly everywhere. But the barefoot Four cries out in pain and hops around, holding his foot.

ARTIE
I think I will take that drink.

Three pours him one. Artie downs it in a swallow... and discovers the tearful Four standing before him.

FOUR
Would you kiss my toe and make it better?

ARTIE
Are you crazy? Get away from me!

FOUR
(crying)
You don't like meeeeee....

THREE
Come here, Four. Never mind the bad man.

Glaring at Artie, Three conforts Four. Artie's appalled. Two hands him the bottle. Artie takes a slug.

ARTIE
Okay, I can't deal with this any more. I gotta sleep. Good night.
(starts out, then)
There's nothing else I should know, is there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Two and Three exchange guilty looks.

ARTIE
Uh-oh. What?

Two clears his throat.

TWO
Well, you remember Kathy?

ARTIE
My assistant, Kathy? Of course, I remember her. Oh, no, wait. You two aren't...?

TWO
Yup.

ARTIE
I don't believe this. What are you, a goat?

TWO
You hypocrite. You've wondered what it would be like since the day you hired her.

ARTIE
That is absolutely untrue. So... what was it like?

Artie and Three lean forward eagerly, but Two only smiles.

TWO
Eat your hearts out, guys.

ARTIE
Okay, now there's nothing more, right? There couldn't possibly be anything more.

There's a frozen smile on Three's face.

ARTIE
Oh, no. Did you and Laura...?!

THREE
Of course not. Not yet, anyway.

ARTIE
Not yet??

CONTINUED:

THREE
Uh... I mean that existentially. Looking forward into time, all things could be said to have some probability, but as a practical matter --

Artie grabs Three by the shirtfront.

ARTIE
Will you tell me what you're talking about?

THREE
Nothing. Forget it. Everything's fine.

Regarding Three with profound distrust, Artie lets him go.

ARTIE
All right, these are orders. Two -- break it off with Kathy immediately.

Two appears about to say something, but a fierce look from Artie stops him cold.

ARTIE
And Three, if you and Laura --

THREE
We won't! I swear!

ARTIE
You better not, or they're going to be blowing Taps over the ol' clone corral. You got that?

Two and Three stare at the floor. Hearing a childish murmur, Artie turns to look.

Four's asleep on a bed, hugging a stuffed panda.

Throwing his hands in the air, Artie exits.

INT. LOGAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dark. Artie, reeling with the implications of recent disclosures, comes in and sits down carefully to not wake Laura.

LAURA
Hi, baby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Artie jumps.

LAURA
Oh, sorry, honey. Here, why don't you lie down? Let me take your shoes off, make you comfortable.

Artie looks at her strangely -- what's this?

LAURA
Poor baby, working so hard. I'll bet you're exhausted. There. There.

She continues undressing him, swings his feet up on the bed.

ARTIE
Um... not to discourage this or anything, but... how come you're being so nice to me?

LAURA
Because you've finally become the man I want -- sensitive, supportive, great with the kids...

Artie reacts.

LAURA
I don't know how you did it, out of the blue like this, but I just feel so close to you ....

She starts making love to him. After a moment of indecision, Artie figures what-the-hey, and let's himself be drawn in. Soon, they're really into it.

LAURA
Oh, Artie, it hasn't been this good in so long... Know what?

ARTIE
What?

LAURA
I'm not using birth control.

With a yelp, Artie vaults off her.

ARTIE
How could you do that? Not do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
(shy, blushing)
It was going to be a surprise. You see, I thought over your proposal.

ARTIE
(suddenly wary)
My proposal?

LAURA
Yes. And I'd like another child, too. Very much.

Artie's eyes go wide as she kisses him.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

as Artie bursts back in, goes to the half-asleep Three, and grabs him by his pajama front.

ARTIE
Are you out of your mind! We can't have another child! I can hardly handle the ones we have now!

THREE
Maybe you can't, but I can. And unlike some people around here, I enjoy being with children.

ARTIE
Well, isn't that peachy -- so you're going to recreate the Brady Bunch! Now listen you: Laura's my wife. Not your wife. Not Two's wife. My wife. And if you so much as touch her, I'll rip out your liver! Got that?

He stomps out.

TWO
Tsk-tsk. Nasty temper.

THREE
You don't think he'd really do something like that, do you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO
I hope so. Then maybe I could finally get some sleep.

Two rolls over to go back to sleep. Three looks after Artie.

THREE
But I want a child, too.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DIVE CLASS - DAY

A fretful Artie's sitting with his class in full dive gear at the edge of the pool. The heavy gear makes it hard to keep his balance.

ARTIE
I don't know about this. What if I forget and hold my breath, and my lungs explode?

DIVE STUDENT
Your lungs won't explode.

ARTIE
How do you know?

DIVE STUDENT
This is just a swimming pool.

ARTIE
So?

DIVE STUDENT
Is this five feet of water?

ARTIE
Yes.

DIVE STUDENT
Can you stand in five feet of water?

ARTIE
(grudgingly)
Yes.

DIVE STUDENT
Then your lungs probably won't explode, will they?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
In my case, they'll figure out a way.

TOM
Okay, regulators in your mouths... and divers down.

ARTIE
Oh, boy...

He and the others slip beneath the surface.

UNDERWATER SHOT

Artie tremulously takes his first underwater breath. His eyes go wide with wonder and delight. He takes more breaths, in a growing euphoria. Spreading his arms, he twirls ecstatically, his worries forgotten.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARTIE'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

The sun is coming up.

INT. ARTIE'S BEDROOM

Artie's little alarm clock goes off, but, his head under the pillow, he doesn't hear it. The alarm quickly runs down. Artie sleeps on.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME - LATER

He's still sleeping as Laura finishes her make-up.

LAURA
Artie, better rise and shine. You'll be late for work.

She goes out.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

as Laura comes in and is shocked to find -- Artie. Or rather Three, fully dressed and making pancakes with the kids.

THREE
Hi, honey.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL

as a perplexed Laura heads back to the bedroom. She looks in... but now the bed's empty. Perplexed, she starts back downstairs.

Artie shuffles out of the bathroom. Seeing Laura, he flings himself back inside. She turns around, sees no one. Shaking her head, she continues down the stairs.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Laura comes back in.

LAURA
This is so weird. I could swear you were just upstairs sleeping.

Three realizes at once what this means.

THREE
Ah, just have to hit the head, honey...

He hurries out.

UPSTAIRS HALL

As Three rushes up the stairs, Artie again comes out of the bathroom.

THREE
What are you doing here? Jesus Christ!

ARTIE
(hearing something)
Never mind that -- the kids are coming.

THREE
Whoa! Hide.

Three pushes him into the kids' room and gets the door closed just as the kids come running up.

THREE
(to the kids, innocently)
Hi, there!

THE KIDS
Hi, daddy!

They try to get around him.

CONTINUED:

THREE
Where are you going?

JENNIFER
We need our backpacks.

THREE
Oh, backpacks. Right. Are you sure you need them? I heard they were having No-Backpack Day at school today.

JENNIFER
That's silly, Daddy. Could you move? We're going to be late.

Again, they try to get by him.

THREE
(speaking very loudly)
Wait, kids! Don't go in. I think I heard monsters.

ZACH
Monsters?

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Artie hears this, reacts with alarm.

THREE (O.S.)
Yes. Big ugly ones. With hair in their ears and slime all over.

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

JENNIFER
Daddy, we have to get our backpacks!

She dodges around Three, throws open the bedroom door. Three tenses, then sags with relief when he sees Artie's not there.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Artie's climbing down a precarious trellis to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
(caged animal)
This is not my life. This is someone else's life, and I'm here by mistake...

CUT TO:

INT. DIVE CLASSROOM

In a little ceremony, Artie's dive class files by the dive teacher. He hands Artie a certificate and shakes his hand.

DIVE TEACHER
Congratulations, Artie-- you're now a certified open water diver.

Artie beams with pride as the others applaud.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S HOUSE

as he comes up to Laura, who's doing the family bills with the Quicken program.

ARTIE
Honey...

LAURA
Mmmm?

ARTIE
Let's take a trip.

LAURA
What?

ARTIE
Let's go somewhere fantastic for a week or two. Some island.

LAURA
But we had a vacation. We went to Oxnard.

ARTIE
Yeah, well...

LAURA
The hotel was very nice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
The hotel was okay. I think it was the repair crew with the jackhammers at six A.M. I had a small problem with.

LAURA
(wistfully)
And then the kids got the stomach flu.

ARTIE
We never left the laundromat. A classic Logan-family vacation.
(puts his arms around her)
Honey, please, cut loose with me.

LAURA
I can't just walk out on my class, Artie. Remember the silk worms? They're just about to come out of their cocoons.

Artie's becoming impassioned.

ARTIE
Laura, we need to come out of <u>our</u> cocoons. And spread our wings. Time's flying -- this'll all be over before we know it. Let's go somewhere a million miles away and sip drinks with umbrellas coming out of them and feed sugar cubes to the little yellow birds...

LAURA
Such a pretty picture. Maybe this summer...

ARTIE
No. Now. Seize the moment.

LAURA
Artie, we have responsibilities. Excuse me. It's Zach's bath time.

She kisses him and goes out. Artie is unhappy.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT

Artie stands before the assembled clones.

ARTIE
...So I'm depending on you guys to keep things together here. I'll only be gone a week. Can you handle it?

The clones look at one another and shrug.

ARTIE
Great. An outpouring of enthusiasm.

TWO
Hey, don't get us wrong, massa. We're happy one of us gets a vacation.

ARTIE
Just tell me things are going to be okay.

THREE
Artie, you're addressing three adult human beings -- .
(sees Four making faces at himself in a mirror)
-- two adult human beings. I'm sure we can handle it. There is one thing, though...

ARTIE
Yes?

THREE
Won't it seem rather odd to Laura if I never sleep in the same room with her?

ARTIE
You always come back to that, don't you?

THREE
(aggrieved)
It's a perfectly legitimate question. I'm trying to keep things running smoothly around here. Like you ordered us to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
Okay, okay, sleep with her. But there's a moat between you. Twenty feet wide. With burning oil...

THREE
All right, Artie, very vivid. I get the picture.

Artie looks the clones over hopefully.

ARTIE
Now tell me I can do this, guys. Am I out of here?

FOUR
(very sincere)
Don't worry. We'll take care of everything.

They all smile at Artie. He smiles shakily back.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLANE

It roars through the sky to Bob Marley's "Lively Up Yourself."

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Artie speeds through the blazing sunshine of a colorful Third World country in a dilapidated taxi.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIVE BOAT - DAY

Artie's at the bow of a big diveboat as it churns through the water.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERWATER

Divers swim around a glorious tropical reef teeming with beautiful fish. Artie's ecstatic, looking everywhere at once.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIVE BOAT - DAY

Artie pulls himself into the boat, excitedly talking to anyone near him.

ARTIE
Wow! I mean wow! Did you see what's under there? What was that round see-through thing? And that blue guy with the gold dots? I thought I was hallucinating. And those little lobsters peeking out out of their little caves? It's like science fiction! When's the next dive?

The other divers chuckle indulgently. An attractive WOMAN DIVER smiles at him.

WOMAN DIVER
The rapture of the deep.

ARTIE
The rapture of the deep. Yeah...

WOMAN DIVER
I get it, too. Hi, my name's Summer.

ARTIE
Of course it is.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT

Three's in the rocking chair, watching a tabloid show. Four comes to him with a piece of art paper covered with childish scrawls. Daubs of color are on his face and hands.

FOUR
Look. Look what I did.

THREE
Oh, very nice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOUR
(pointing)
These are spiked marlins.

THREE
Spiked, huh? And here I thought they were just regular marlins.

FOUR
Three, I don't feel good. My throat hurts.

THREE
Uh-oh. Maybe it's the flu. Let's hope you don't get an ear infection, too.

FOUR
Your ears can get affected??

Two comes in.

THREE
Hi. How was your day?

Two heads straight for the refrigerator and pours a vodka on the rocks.

TWO
Like the Tet Offensive. That Rotweiler's such a dickhead...

FOUR
What's a dickhead?

THREE
You want to watch your language, Two?

TWO
Ah, jeez, you'd think by the time we were thirty-seven years old we could finally stop worrying about saying -- .

FOUR
(running around the room)
Dickhead! Dickhead! Dickhead!

Three gives Two an "I rest my case" look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO
I apologize. How about "That Rotweiler's such a motherf-- ?

THREE
(hastily interrupting)
Hey, look at this great picture Four painted!

He holds it up for Two to see.

TWO
Huh. Spiked marlins.

Three looks at him in amazement.

TWO
Listen, Laura called me at the office. She wants to go out tonight. She got a sitter and everything.

THREE
Go out? Where? Why?

TWO
Who knows? She was being mysterious.

THREE
Oh, God. What's she up to?

TWO
It's a date.

THREE
Married people don't have dates. She wants something. I know she wants something.

TWO
Yeah, dinner.

THREE
You don't think she'll want to, you know, do it with me...?

TWO
If I were her, I wouldn't want to do it with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THREE
But what if she does? Two, you take her out. I can't handle this.

TWO
You have to handle it -- it's your job.

THREE
Oh, God, what'll I do?

Two turns in disgust from the distraught Three to find that a sorrowful Four has wandered up to him.

FOUR
The world's terrible. I should be killed.

TWO
What is this, a seminar on coping? Here!

He hands Four a stuffed toy to hold, then, after a thought, gives one to Three, too.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORAL REEF CLUB - NIGHT

Artie and Summer dine beneath the stars. Several empty glasses stand next to full ones. All have little umbrellas sticking out of them.

ARTIE
When did you start diving?

SUMMER
Six years ago. It's become my escape hatch. When things get too nuts back there, I fly away, jump in the water, and I'm myself again.

ARTIE
What do you do...back there?

SUMMER
Reporter. WCDP, Pittsburg.

Artie looks impressed. She holds up a hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUMMER
It's not glamorous, it's brutal. It eats up every second of your time. You burn out. Every day.
(smiles)
And then you escape. What about you?

ARTIE
I'm, uh, in duplication.

SUMMER
Like copying equipment?

ARTIE
It's hard to explain.

SUMMER
So how is the copying business these days?

ARTIE
Actually, it seems to be opening up a lot of possibilities for me.

Summer looks at him appraisingly.

SUMMER
Want to dance?

ARTIE
(taken aback)
You mean as in stand up and go over there and dance?

SUMMER
Unless you know some other way.

She leads the nervous Artie to the dance floor, dances close with him. He gradually gets into it as the nearly-forgotten joys of holding a sweet-smelling young stranger in your arms kick in.

CUT TO:

EXT. BERKELEY ROSE GARDEN

The same stars shine down on the beautiful, romantic Berkeley Rose Garden. Laura and Three are picnicking by the little waterfall. She's made herself look especially sexy and fine, and Three is very uncomfortable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
Artie, do you know how much I appreciate you?

THREE
Ah... a bushel and a peck?

LAURA
A lot more than that.

THREE
Oh, hey, what's so special about me?

LAURA
You slave away with that awful Dick Rotweiler week after week and never complain.

THREE
Well, I don't...

LAURA
And still you manage to find time to be such a good husband and dad.

THREE
Just doing my job.

LAURA
And then to be so modest about it. Oh, Artie, I do love you. Here's to us.

She raises her glass of wine and he has to toast with her.

LAURA
Even though I couldn't go to the islands, I don't see why we can't rekindle our romance right here at home. Starting tonight.

She gives him a very sexy look. He chokes on his wine.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORAL REEF CLUB - NIGHT.

Artie and Summer sit by a rock pool containing beautiful and exotic tropical fish.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The tinkling of the little fountain, the perfume of the flowers, and the caress of the air are creating an atmosphere of purest magic. Not to mention the drinks they've knocked back.

SUMMER
Ahhhhh. Life was meant for nights like this.

ARTIE
It sure was.

SUMMER
You know, I've always felt that God's greatest gift to us is the ability to experience pleasure.

ARTIE
Thank you, God.

SUMMER
And that guilt's just a wasted emotion.

As they gaze at each other, a little yellow bird lands on their table and begins pecking at a sugar cube.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Summer's opening the door. Artie's nervousness has returned.

ARTIE
Well, 6 A.M. dive tomorrow. I should probably go clean my snorkel...

SUMMER
Artie, first clean my snorkel.

She looks up at him, eyes luminous in the moonlight, lips very full. In a situation like this, all but a handful of heterosexual men -- extremely old Bhuddist monks, perhaps -- would find themselves utterly unable to say no.

ARTIE
Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN

They enter.

SUMMER
Tequila?

ARTIE
One more tequila and my head's going to feel like a cactus in the morning. In fact, I really should be going...

She gently pulls him down to the bed with her.

SUMMER
Artie, relax. This is vacation.

She kisses him gently. He kisses her back. She begins unbuttoning his shirt. He lets her slip it off. He begins unbuttoning her shirt. And stops.

ARTIE
I can't do this.

SUMMER
I know -- these buttons are really hard sometimes. Here, let me...

She starts unbuttoning them for him.

ARTIE
No, no, I mean I can't do any of this. Autumn... Winter... stop unbuttoning. I'm sorry, but I'm... I'm...

SUMMER
Married.

ARTIE
Yeah.

SUMMER
This is a hell of a time to tell me. Is it because you love her that much? Or you feel that guilty?

ARTIE
Both. Please don't take this personally -- you're great. You're too great. I have to get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She manages a smile.

SUMMER
Okay. I understand. But you sure did wait til the last minute, didn't you?

They're at the door. She gives him a quick, sexy kiss, and pushes him out into the night.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Artie, torn by conflicting emotions, walks along one of the magical beach club walkways, oblivious to paradise.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S HOUSE

as Three comes in.

THREE
(calling)
Well, sitter's home.

He heads for the kitchen.

LAURA (O.S.)
Artie...

He freezes.

LAURA (O.S.)
Up here, baby...

Three gulps. He moves toward the stairs as if mesmerized by a Siren's call.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Three peers in. Laura's reclining on the bed in an amazing negligee.

LAURA
I've been waiting.

THREE
Uh...isn't this garbage night?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns to go back out.

LAURA
Artie...

He stops.

LAURA
Artie...?

He turns and looks at her, in an agony of indecision.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Two's watching a ballgame in the rocking chair. Four's tossing and turning in his bed.

FOUR
Two?

TWO
Yeah?

FOUR
I can't sleep.

TWO
It's easy. Just close your eyes and snore.

Four pads over and looks at him.

FOUR
My tummy hurts.

TWO
I told you to cool it with that pepperoni pizza.

FOUR
And my throat's still sore, and I have diarreah, and I'm shivering.

TWO
Huh. Maybe you are sick.

FOUR
Could you rock me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO
"Rock" you?

Four climbs into the surprised Two's lap.

FOUR
Come on. Back and forth.

Awkwardly, Two begins rocking him. It's a curiously touching moment as Four curls up and begins slowly to drift off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARTIE'S BUNGALOW

Morning light streams in the window.

Artie awakens. He sits up blearily, reacts to his hangover, pops some Advils.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

He walks listlessly along. Sitting on a dune, he pensively gazes at the sea.

A FRISBY narrowly misses his head and lands next to him. A LITTLE GIRL runs up and stops shyly. Artie brightens, picks the Frisby out of the sand.

ARTIE
Is this yours?

She nods solemnly.

ARTIE
Maybe we could throw it together.

He spins the Frisby on his finger, making her smile.

ARTIE
I'm a daddy, you know. When I'm home. I have a little boy and a girl who looks almost like you.

GIRL
You miss them?

ARTIE
Oh, yeah...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL
I can always tell when someone's loneless.

ARTIE
You can, huh?

GIRL
Why don't you go see them?

FATHER (O.S.)
Amy! Come on...

Artie sees Amy's parents walking by the water with a baby in a backpack.

GIRL
Bye.

She runs off and joins her family as they head on down the beach. Artie sadly waves to her retreating back.

ARTIE
Bye...

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT

It's still early in this time zone. Two's sleeping, as Four watches a Roadrunner cartoon with the sound low.

FOUR
(mimicking the Roadrunner)
Beep beep.

The phone RINGS. Four keeps watching TV. Two groans and pulls his pillow over his head.

ANSWERING MACHINE
(Four's childish message)
Hi. We're not here. But if you leave a message, we'll call you right back.
(Artie's voice)
Yo! Somebody pick up!

Four does.

FOUR
Hi, Artie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INTERCUT between Four and Artie on a Third World pay phone.

ARTIE
Four. How are you?

FOUR
Fine. I had a sore throat last night, but it went away.

ARTIE
Good. How's everything? How's Three?

FOUR
I don't know. He only shows up in the mornings.

Artie winces.

ARTIE
What's Two up to?

FOUR
Sleeping.

ARTIE
Sleeping? Tell him to get up -- it's time for work.

FOUR
(screams)
Four! Get up, it's time for work!

Artie reacts with pain in his ear.

ARTIE
How are Jennifer and Zach? Have you seen them?

FOUR
Zach?

Four's face brightens as an idea comes into his head.

ZACH
He's not home. I can play with his toys.

ARTIE
What? No, don't do that! Four?

But the receiver is dangling as Four exits in the b.g.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHONE
(Artie's voice)
Shit!

EXT. ISLAND PAY PHONE - DAY

Artie slams the phone down, tries to use long distance again. All he gets are weird noises. He starts banging the phone. An operator comes on.

OPERATOR
Please, mon, do not take out your frustrations on our poor telephone.

ARTIE
I was cut off!

OPERATOR
Then you must try later.

ARTIE
But I have to talk to them now.

OPERATOR
It is deeply vexing.

ARTIE
When's the phone going to work again?

OPERATOR
This afternoon? Tonight? Soon come.

Frustrated, Artie hangs up. After a moment, he picks the receiver back up.

ARTIE
Hey, it's me again. Can you make a local call for me?

OPERATOR
It would be my indisputable pleasure, mon. With whom may I connect you?

ARTIE
Caribbean Airways -- reservations.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

A Caribbean Airways flight lifts off the runway.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE - CONTINUOUS

An abashed, worried Artie watches the island recede below.

ARTIE
I never should have left them alone. I should have boarded them somewhere...

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT

Two's awake, but still in bed, not looking so good. Three takes a thermometer from his mouth as Four, sitting by the bed, plays with a Gameboy.

THREE
103. Wow. No work today.

TWO
That's not an option. Corporate's in from New York. Our career's on the line.

He sits up, looks nauseous, runs for the bathroom. SOUNDS of vomitting.

FOUR
Is Two sick?

THREE
Generally, when you hear that particular noise, it means someone's sick.

FOUR
Gross.

Two reemerges, pale and shakey. He looks at Three.

TWO
Okay, here's what we're going to do. Three, you're going to the office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THREE
You've got to be kidding. I can't be in an office. Flourescent lights give me panic attacks.

TWO
Cut the crap, Three, this is an emergency. If there're problems, call me and I'll talk you through them. Okay?

THREE
(very bummed out)
Okay, okay...

He pulls a shirt and tie from the closet, starts getting dressed.

TWO
And Four, you'll have to take over with Laura and the kids.

Four's eyes widen.

FOUR
Me?? But...what if she wants to talk about mutual funds or something?

TWO
She won't want to talk about mutual funds.

FOUR
What if something bad happens?

THREE
Like what?

FOUR
Ninjas could come, or --

TWO
Oh, for Christ's sake!

A cloud comes over Four's face; tears well in his eyes.

FOUR
Why are you so mean all the time?

TWO
Me, mean? I'm not mean. Grarrrrr!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He thrusts his face at Four with a fierce, angry expression. Four recoils with a little cry.

THREE
Knock it off, Two. Four, it'll be fun. You can play with Jennifer and Zach.

FOUR
(thinks)
Really? Oh, boy. Think they'll let me play with their Supernintendo? It's got better graphics and more options and the controllers let you --

TWO
Sure, sure. But remember -- the less you talk, the better off we'll be. And don't say anything around Laura. Comprendo?

Four solemnly zips his lips. Abruptly, Two goes pale and again tears for the bathroom. Three and Four look at each other.

THREE
Artie sure picked a hell of a time to take a hike.

FOUR
He's hiking?

CUT TO:

INT. MIAMI AIRPORT

An anxious Artie's at an airline counter.

WOMAN
I'm sorry, Mr. Logan, your connecting flight was cancelled. Let's see, we could route you through Kansas City...

CUT TO:

INT. CANDY PLANT - EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Three, looking ill at ease, walks tentatively into his office...

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

...and stops short. An EXEC looks up at him.

EXEC
Yes, Artie?

THREE
Oh, ah...

EXEC
(laughs)
Forget you don't live here anymore?

Three slaps his head.

THREE
Do you believe that?

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Three comes out and looks around. Spotting Kathy, he heads toward her.

AT KATHY'S DESK

Three peers into the doorway behind her.

THREE
Wow. Finally got that corner office.

KATHY
Morning, Artie.
(looks him over)
Hey, I like you back in lenses.

THREE
Oh, ah...thank you.

KATHY
And your hair...nice. How'd you get it to look so much longer?

THREE
It's this new technique -- you blow on your thumb.

He gives her a demonstration.

KATHY
(confused)
Are you kidding?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THREE
Yeah, my dumb sense of humor... Say, you're hair looks different, too. I like it.

KATHY
(looks at him oddly)
I cut it this way for you last week. Don't you remember?

THREE
Oh, of course. I just meant it looks particularly different today. Well...

He heads for the safety of his office.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

But Kathy follows him in, closing the door.

KATHY
Mr. Rotweiler called. He wants to see you at ten with Robin Jensen.

ARTIE
Oh, God. They're not going to ask me questions, are they?

Kathy smiles at him kittenishly.

KATHY
I have a question for you.

THREE
You do?

She puts her arms around him.

KATHY
How about a long lunch today?

THREE
What? What?

KATHY
I'm wearing something new...

She unbuttons the top of her blouse, revealing a piece of sexy black lingerie. Three blanches.

CONTINUED:

THREE
Oh, jeez. Look, I'm not... I mean, what you're thinking is...

KATHY
And afterwards, we should talk.

THREE
Talk?

KATHY
Yes, about us. Where we're heading. What we should do with our lives.

THREE
But Two was going to break it off. We didn't break it off?

The phone RINGS.

THREE
The phone!

He pounces on it.

THREE
Hello! Oh, hi!
(to Kathy, happily)
It's the ad agency!
(into phone)
An extra twenty thousand?? Er... could you hold a minute?
(to Kathy)
Do I have a bathroom?

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Two's in bed, drifting in a restless half sleep. RING! He jumps, holds his heart, picks up the receiver.

TWO
What.

Intercut conversation -- Three's on his bathroom phone.

THREE
Two? It's Three.

Two tries to sit, but feels so awful he gives up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO
What's the matter?

THREE
The agency wants to up the budget on the Choco-Bite spots by twenty thousand dollars!

TWO
No way! They have to abide by the contract.

THREE
Good. That sounds good.

TWO
Now let me get some sleep, willya? I feel like phlegm.

THREE
Sorry. Of course.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

as Three returns and picks up the phone.

THREE
You have to abide by the contract. Oh. Cost overruns? That sounds awful. Wow, that really is tough. They'd fire you for something like that? Gosh, we can't let that happen. Well, I'll authorize the extra twenty. Oh, hey, glad to help. You have a nice day, too.

Artie hangs up. Kathy regards him strangely.

THREE
Hey, what are friends for if you can't help each other out of a jam every now and then.

KATHY
Artie, that wasn't a friend -- that was an ad agency.

Unannounced, in walks Rotweiler and ROBIN JENSEN -- dynamic, thirtyish and female.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROTWEILER
...and this is our front-runner for the new vice-presidency, Artie Logan. Artie, meet Robin Jensen.

JENSEN
(shaking Artie's hand)
Nice to meet you, Artie. I've heard a lot about you.

THREE
(flustered)
I've heard a lot about you, too, Ms., uh...
(Kathy mouths the name)
...Johnson.

The two Execs exchange a look.

KATHY
(trying to cover for him)
Can I get anyone anything? Evian? Shot and a beer?

ROTWEILER
No, thank you, dear. Would you mind closing the door on your way out?
(to Artie, as she leaves)
We don't have a lot of time -- Robin has a plane to catch.

They sit down.

JENSEN
I'm happy to report that your stock is high at corporate, Artie. You've cut costs and raised productivity sharply, the best performance of any of our divisions.

THREE
I did that? Wow.

JENSEN
Frankly, we were surprised -- your history didn't indicate any particular proclivity for leadership.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THREE
I was president of the Stamp Club in high school.

Jensen and Rotweiler laugh.

ROTWEILER
Artie, you nut.

JENSEN
To come to the point, then, we apparently made some overly optimistic projections, and we now need to reduce costs an additional twelve percent.

THREE
Reduce costs?
(they nod)
Here, in my department?
(they nod)
By another twelve percent?

ROTWEILER
Is there a problem?

THREE
No, no, I just want to be sure I understand. You want me to...?

JENSEN
Create greater cost effectiveness by reducing collateral expenses.

Three looks completely confused.

ROTWEILER
Fire people!

THREE
What?? Ah, just have to hit the head, gentlemen...

He races into the john.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He reacts as he gets a BUSY SIGNAL.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Two is snoring peacefully, the phone off the hook.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

as Three reluctantly returns.

JENSEN
So we're set then.

THREE
Well...

ROTWEILER
Good.

JENSEN
A pleasure to meet you at last, Artie. Keep up the good work.

She shakes his hand, and the Execs head out.

THREE
Uh... just a minute.

They turn.

THREE
Couldn't we find some other way? Early retirements? Cheaper Scotch for the Christmas party...?

ROTWEILER
Artie, what's the matter with you today? Just lay off ten or twelve more workers and be done with it.

Artie is clearly upset.

ARTIE
But you can't just fire people. Doesn't ruining their lives bother you at all?

Rotweiler is dumbfounded.

ROTWEILER
Artie, what the hell's wrong?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THREE
Imagine if you were fired. How would you feel? How would your wife and kids feel?

JENSEN
(to Rotweiller)
This isn't what I expected, Dick. I thought you said we could depend on him.

ROTWEILER
I thought we could.

THREE
(getting control of himself)
Look, I don't mean to raise my voice. But don't you think that if we sat down together and came at this in a less heirarchal, more cooperative, interdependent way, we could solve these problems without anyone getting hurt? I mean, our priority is people, right?

They stare at him, speechless.

CUT TO:

INT. KANSAS CITY AIRPORT

Artie faces another Airline Lady.

LADY
I'm so sorry, Mr. Logan -- your flight to Oakland just left. However, I can get you on another in only three hours.

He stares at her hollowly.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIE'S HOUSE - KIDS' ROOM

Jennifer and Zach are looking strangely at Four, who is driving a toy car into a Lego castle.

FOUR
Brrrrrmmmm... Brrrrmmmmm...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZACH
Can I drive the car, Daddy?

FOUR
No. Brrrmmmm...

Laura enters.

LAURA
Kids, I want to talk to your father. If you go right now, without making a fuss, I'll give you an extra half-hour of TV.

Jennifer, Zach, and Four cheer and run for the door.

LAURA
Artie?

Four remembers what he's supposed to be doing. He reluctantly returns.

LAURA
You really surprise me sometimes.

Four is uncertain how to react. He smiles ingenously.

LAURA
Artie, I need to talk. I'm confused and upset about last night. I wanted you so much, and you just turned around and walked out. What happened?

Four purses his lips and looks thoughtful.

LAURA
Please -- talk to me. I'm feeling so vulnerable right now. Maybe it was nothing, but can't you reassure me?

Four's eyes stray to a plastic wind-up frog on a shelf next to him.

LAURA
It means so much, being close to you. You've showed me just how good things can be. Please, Artie, tell me what's going on.

Four has sneakily picked up the frog and is trying to wind it without Laura noticing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
Artie!

Four starts guiltily and drops the frog on the floor where it crazily hops about. Four smiles, watching it.

LAURA
(imploring)
Artie, I love you.

Taking Four by the face, she kisses him passionately. Four's eyes fly open. When she releases him, he steps back with a look of shock.

LAURA
Can't you say you love me?

Four nods a tight little nod, failing to satisfy her.

LAURA
I just don't understand you at all!

Fighting off tears, she runs out. The minute she's gone, Four goes into a paroxysm of spitting and hawking and rubbing his sleeve against his tongue.

FOUR
Yuck! Blech! That was ascusting!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARTIE'S STREET - NIGHT

An airport shuttle drops Artie a few doors down from his house. He walks to his garage, slips inside.

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ARTIE
Two? Three? Four?

No one there. Worried, he heads back out.

EXT. ARTIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Checking through the window, Artie finds the Clones sprawled listlessly around the living room. Two and Three are taking hits from a whisky bottle, Four from one of Zach's boxed juices. Now seriously alarmed, he heads for the door.

INT. ARTIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Coming in, Artie's shocked to find the place a mess. The clones, even more shocked at his sudden appearance, sit up guiltily, try to make themselves presentable.

THREE
Artie. We didn't expect you back so soon. How was the trip?

ARTIE
Short.

FOUR
Did you get me a starfish?

ARTIE
I didn't have time.

Four's close to tears.

FOUR
Nobody cares about me.

ARTIE
What's going on here? Where's Laura? Where're the kids?

TWO AND THREE
Well, ah, er... You see, we, uh...

ARTIE
Two, why aren't you at work?

TWO
Better ask Three.

Artie turns on Three.

THREE
(very nervous)
Artie, we never really liked that job, right? And since the buyout, things had just been going from bad to worse.

ARTIE
What are you talking about?

THREE
Well... on top of your dresser? There's this really generous severence check I negotiated for...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
You got me fired?? You son of a bitch!

He grabs Three by the shirtfront. Two separates them, barely keeping Artie away.

FOUR
Is "fired" bad?

ARTIE
(to Two)
What was he doing at work?

TWO
Totally blowing it, obviously.

THREE
It wasn't my fault! They were making me get rid of half the department! I couldn't do it!

In stunned disbelief, Artie sinks into a chair.

ARTIE
My God. Does Laura know?

The clones exchange looks.

THREE
I don't think she's heard yet.

ARTIE
Thank God for small favors.
(sitting bolt upright)
Hey! What are we doing here? She could walk in any minute!

Four shakes his head solemnly.

FOUR
Uh-uh...

ARTIE
(with a look of dread)
What's that mean?

TWO
Artie, she took the kids and split.

ARTIE
What?? Why?

CONTINUED:

He stares at them in apoplexy. Four, scared, begins to cry.

FOUR
Don't be mad. I did exackly what Two told me. I didn't say a word.

ARTIE
Wait a minute. Laura was with Four?

TWO
It's a long story.

FOUR
She kept wanting me to answer her, but I didn't even know what she was talking about. She said all these things...

ARTIE
What things?

FOUR
I don't know. Things.

ARTIE
Don't you remember any of them?

FOUR
Uh... wait a minute... yeah!

ARTIE
What was it?

FOUR
She said I could have an extra half-hour of TV.

The others react.

ARTIE
(wearily)
Thanks, guys. You've ruined my life.

TWO
Oh, give me a break. We tried to help your pathetic little life, and this is the thanks we get.

Artie explodes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
Help? Help? All you've done from the minute you got here is screw up every way known to man! I wanted trusted comrades -- I got the Three Stooges!

FOUR
I've seen them! They're great!

ARTIE
(to them all)
Well, this is it. Get out of my house.

THREE
Aw, Artie, come on. We --

ARTIE
Now! All of you!

THREE
But this is a crisis. You need our help.

ARTIE
How are you going to help next? Give me plague?

THREE
I know if we could just sit down and talk...

TWO
Quit begging. Don't you have any pride?

Two takes Four's hand and starts out, the dispirted Three following.

FOUR
Why is he being so mean?

TWO
Because he's an asshole.

FOUR
I want my blankie.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM

Artie is blasted by a hot shower.

SAME - SLIGHTLY LATER

Billows of steam accompany him as he leaves the stall. They resucitate a finger-scrawled message on the mirror: I LOVE DADDY. Agonized, he stares at it.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN

Artie peers at the phone.

His finger runs down the pre-programmed phone number buttons, stops at "Laura - Mom & Dad".

He pushes the button. Busy signal.

ARTIE
Damn.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOGAN HOUSE - DAY

Artie comes out, walks purposfully toward his car, then pauses as he hears something coming from the garage apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE (CONTINUOUS)

Artie tops the stairs, opens the door, and reacts.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT (CONTINUOUS)

Four, next to a suitcase half packed with toys and other junk, is before the TV, totally involved in a very loud VIDEO GAME.

ARTIE
Four?
(no answer)
Four?

Still no answer. Artie SLAMS the door. Four jumps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOUR
Hi. Guess what I'm doing.

ARTIE
Destroying your hearing?

FOUR
Running away from home.

ARTIE
Oh, I see.

FOUR
The minute I beat this boss.

ARTIE
(laughs without humor)
That's my next step, too.

FOUR
What?

ARTIE
Battling my boss -- to get my job back. Well, later...

He turns to leave.

FOUR
Don't leave! I'm scared.

ARTIE
Where's Two and Three?

FOUR
We had an argument and everyone yelled and then they went away.

ARTIE
Aw, Chri -- I mean, heck. I guess you'll have to come along.

FOUR
I can't. I'm playing.

He beeps and boops away. Artie, annoyed, assumes his sternest parental stance.

ARTIE
If you don't come right away, no TV for a week.

FOUR
I hate you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
(taken aback)
What?

FOUR
You order me around all the time. You never play with me. What's the matter with you? Don't you ever want to have fun?

Artie can't think of a thing to say -- Four's nailed him.

ARTIE
All right, look, I'll play with you... sometime.

FOUR
No. Now.

Four wears a stubborn, set expression. Artie sighs and sits next to Four. Four hands him the other video controller.

FOUR
I got it set up for you. All you have to do is vaporize that blob and you win this level.

Artie clumsily works the controller.

FOUR
You almost got him.

ARTIE
I did get him. Are you sure this thing's working?

FOUR
Just jump a little sooner.

Artie does. The screen explodes in a thousand bursts of color. Artie's stunned, transfixed.

FOUR
All right!

He goes to give Artie a high five. Artie's so tripped out by the pyrotechnics, he doesn't notice. Four shrugs.

ARTIE
I did that?

FOUR
Sure did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
But this is great. Why didn't you show me before?

FOUR
I tried to.

ARTIE
(abashed)
Oh.

FOUR
Wanna play again?

ARTIE
Yeah! But first I have to do something. Wanna come?

FOUR
To the office? To see Mr. Bratwurst?

ARTIE
There's going to be a showdown.

FOUR
(wide-eyed)
With guns?

ARTIE
Maybe some sparks.

FOUR
(leaps up)
Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - DAY

It races along the freeway.

CUT TO:

EXT. DANDY CANDIES - DAY

Artie, holding Four's hand, strides into the candy factory.

INT. CANDY FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

The conveyer belts are still whizzing candies this way and that. Four stares wide-eyed.

FOUR
Wow.

ARTIE
Thought you'd like this. I'll be right back. Just stay here and don't bother anyone, okay?

Four is transfixed. Artie smiles and heads out.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Artie's heading along determinedly when Kathy comes around a corner and they nearly collide. It's a tie as to who's the more surprised.

ARTIE
Kathy....

KATHY
Artie....

Artie, unsure what's gone down between Two and Kathy, gropes for words.

ARTIE
Uh... so nice to see you.

KATHY
Nice to see me? Why haven't you called?

ARTIE
Kathy, I, uh... don't know what to say. Literally.

KATHY
How about I'm sorry? Sorry I lied to you. Sorry I led you on. Sorry about everything.

Artie's actually relieved to know where he stands.

ARTIE
I am sorry. Some part of my personality just got away from me. I never meant to hurt you, I swear. Or lead you on, or any of those things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATHY
So what's it going to be? Am I in your life or not?

ARTIE
I hope always -- as my good and special friend.

Kathy contemplates exactly what this means.

KATHY
You've worked things out with Laura.

ARTIE
Yes. Well, maybe. Actually, I have no idea.

He looks so lost that Kathy can't find it in her heart to be angry. She shakes her head.

KATHY
Okay, Artie, you're off the hook. But I'll miss you... and those amazing things you used to do when we, you know... They made me feel like such a woman.

It's clear what she means.

ARTIE
They did?
(casual)
Um, what <u>were</u> some of those things? Sometimes the experience is so intense that I actually can't remember what I --

They're interrupted by ANGRY YELLING from Mr. Rotweiler's office.

TWO (O.S.)
ROTWEILER, YOU MISERABLE BASTARD!

ARTIE
Omigod. Gotta go.

He rushes off.

INT. OUTSIDE ROTWEILER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A crowd has gathered outside Mr. Rotweiler's office; through the pebbled glass, we can make out two men arguing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. ROTWEILER (O.S.)
Who the hell do you think you are, barging in here? You've been terminated!

TWO (O.S.)
You're not getting rid of me 'til I've told you what I think of you, you goddamn nazi!

Members of the crowd look at each other in amazed delight. Artie's saying what they'd love to be saying.

At which point, the real Artie elbows his way through the crowd.

ARTIE
'Scuse me. Pardon me.

The office workers do double takes -- if Artie's here, who's that in there?

Artie knocks on the door.

ROTWEILER (O.S.)
Go away!

But Artie bursts in anyway.

INT. ROTWEILER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Rotweiler looks over in annoyance.

MR. ROTWEILER
I thought I said --

He breaks off in amazement. Two, seeing Artie, grins broadly.

TWO
Now things oughta get hot. Yo, Artie, howza dude?

It seems that Two's drunk.

ARTIE
I'm fine, Two, thank you. Mr. Rotweiler, I have to talk to you.

MR. ROTWEILER
I think you've talked to me quite enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
That isn't me, that's my, uh, demented half-brother. He gets his kicks out of impersonating me.

TWO
Uh-oh -- I'm getting a bad feeling about this...

ARTIE
Just shut up for once, can't you?
(to Rotweiler)
Mr. Rotweiler, please give me another chance.

TWO
Are you crazy? After the way he treated us?

ROTWEILER
Give me one good reason why I should.

ARTIE
Because I know the chocolate division better than anyone. Because I'll do anything you tell me to. I'll even take a cut in pay.

FOUR
Don't forget shining his shoes and emptying his garbage.

ARTIE
Goddamn it, Two!

MR. ROTWEILER
I don't know what this clown act is, but I'm busy. I want you both out of here now.

He reaches to open the door.

ARTIE
Mr. Rotweiler, please?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO
Artie, you wimp! All right, if you won't do this, I will.
(to Rotweiler)
Listen, mein Fuhrer, we wouldn't stay here any longer if you begged us. This used to be a decent place to work. Maybe we weren't cutting edge. We even let the line workers eat the candy! But it was a happy scene here, and we all made out okay. Until you came.

He advances on Rotweiler.

TWO
To you, all we are is a profit center. You don't care what you do or who you hurt! You've got us all living in fear, never knowing what day our number's going to be up.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE ROTWEILER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The crowd relates strongly to what Two's saying.

SNAKE
You tell 'im, Artie!

CUT TO:

INT. ROTWEILER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Two's poking Rotweiler's chest with his finger

TWO
You're a hateful son of a bitch, and I almost let you turn me into one, too. "To make people's lives, especially children's lives, a little happier." You're so full of shit, it's coming out your ears.

ROTWEILER
You bastard!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He punches Two in the stomach. Two crumples to the floor, gasping for breath.

Artie gapes, shocked, as Rotweiler picks up the phone.

ROTWEILER
Get me security.

TWO
(to Artie)
Are you... going to let him... get away with that?

ARTIE
No!
(to Rotweiler)
Hey, you corporate scum! Put down that phone!

Rotweiler's eyes go wide as the angry Artie bears down on him.

EXT. ROTWEILER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

as the workers see Artie coldcock Rotweiler, sending him flying over the desk with a satisfying crash. They cheer.

INT. ROTWEILER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Artie looks from his fist to Rotweiler and back. He can't believe what he's done.

Two's getting to his feet. With a huge grin, he throws an arm around Artie.

TWO
Damn, I didn't know you had it in you. Nice goin', pal.

Artie grins back.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROTWEILER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The two Arties emerge to applause and whistles. As they head out, the applause continues.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANDY FACTORY - PARKING LOT - DAY

Artie strides out, followed by Two dragging Four, who's face is smeared with chocolate.

FOUR
But I don't want to leave yet!
I was having fun! Two, lemme go!

As they near Artie's car, the carphone rings.

FOUR
I'll get it! I'll get it!

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

As Four jumps in and grabs the phone.

FOUR
(Bugs Bunny)
Ehhhhh, what's up, Doc?

His expression changes from mischevious to worried. He thrusts the phone at Artie, who takes it.

ARTIE
Hello.

LAURA
(hysterically, through phone)
Where have you been? I've been calling everywhere!

ARTIE
Laura, what's the matter?

LAURA
Where are Jennifer and Zachary?

ARTIE
What?

LAURA
You said you'd bring them home hours ago. Are they okay?
Artie, tell me they're okay.

Artie puts his hand over the receiver, turns to Two and Four.

ARTIE
The kids are missing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO & FOUR
(exchange a look)
Three.

ARTIE
(realizing they're right)
Oh, boy.
(into phone)
Of course they're okay. We just lost track of the time.

LAURA
Please put them on. I'm not going to feel okay until I've talked to them.

ARTIE
Ah... They're in the bathroom. We're at McDonalds.

He prompts Two and Four.

TWO AND FOUR
Big Mac, small fries and a coke. Mommy, I want a Kids' Meal. Etc.

LAURA
How could you do this? I was worried sick you'd stolen them.

ARTIE
Laura, I wouldn't do a thing like that.

LAURA
The way you've been acting lately, who knows what you'd do? Just bring them home, okay?

ARTIE
Sure. See you soon.

LAURA
Oh, Artie? There's something you should know.

ARTIE
You love me?

LAURA
No. I called the police. I gave them your description.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On Artie's reaction, we...

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DUSK

Artie, Two and Four cruise along suburban streets. They look stressed out.

TWO
Artie, we've been looking for hours. Four's hungry, and so am I. We gotta eat something.

ARTIE
We can't stop. If anything happened to them, I'd never forgive myself.

TWO
Maybe we ought to start checking airports and bus terminals.

ARTIE
Oh, God, you don't think he kidnapped them, do you?

TWO
Hey, Three's such a sap I wouldn't put anything past him.

ARTIE
But there'd be no way he could pay for tickets. No, he's still here. We've just got to find him.

FOUR
Yo! The fuzz!

As a police car slowly cruises past them, Artie, Two and Four slouch down like guilty criminals, lamely concealing their faces. The cop car slows, but then gets a radio call and speeds off. In Artie's car, there's a sigh of relief.

TWO
This is great. Remind me to do this for my next vacation.

ARTIE
They've got to be somewhere...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His eyes stray to Four, then go wide as he has an idea.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADE

A hundred games create a din of beeps, boops, and "Aarghs!" Artie and Two look everywhere, but no soap.

ARTIE
Damn! Let's go.

TWO
Where's the kid?

Annoyed, Artie sees that Four's gone. They find him racking up a record score on some game as other kids cheer. The cheering turns to booing when Artie and Two drag the protesting Four out.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

They drive along, Artie wearing the fixed, stubborn expression we saw earlier on Four.

FOUR
I'm tired. I want to go to bed.

Another cop car's approaching. Artie quickly turns onto another street.

TWO
I hear they have great beds in jail. Food, too: Horseburger, roach soup...

ARTIE
We're not giving up!

TWO
What's left? We've looked every possible place in a radius of twenty miles.

ARTIE
If we'd looked everywhere, we'd have found them.
(thinks)
Four, help me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOUR
Me?

ARTIE
Pretend you're Zach. Three says, "Okay, kids, what should we do?" You say...

FOUR
Uh... play!

TWO
Great. Play. What we need are specifics!

Four looks put down. But Artie comes alive.

ARTIE
No, wait. That could be it. Four, you're brilliant.

FOUR
I am?

TWO
He is?

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

It's the same park Artie took the kids to earlier, when Jennifer fell off the monkey bars. Artie leads the other two into it.

The night is velvety, stars sparkle, the air is still warm. Magic.

At first, it seems deserted. But as they move deeper in, they hear laughter -- children's laughter. Artie, hoping against hope, races ahead.

ARTIE
Jenny? Zach?

He can now make out human shapes in the sand playground -- an area of slides and concrete play structures on a bed of soft sand.

And there, climbing on a giant, goofy CONCRETE TURTLE , are Zach and Jenny!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a cry of relief, happiness, pleasure -- whatever -- he runs to the children and enfolds them in his arms, covering them with kisses.

ARTIE
Oh, Jenny, Zach.

Three, near the swings, looks like he's about to step into this scene when he hears a psssssst from the bushes and sees Two and Four. Four gestures for him to join them. Three shakes his head. Two balls up a fist. Three sighs and joins them.

Jenny and Zach are nonplussed by this sudden outpouring of emotion from Artie.

JENNY
Daddy, why are you crying?

ZACH
Ouch, you're squeezing me!

ARTIE
Oh, God, I missed you so much.

ZACH
(confused)
Because we were on the turtle?

JENNIFER
But we've been together for hours.

ARTIE
I know, honey. Sometimes I just need to hold you.

He looks at them with unqualified love.

JENNIFER
So let's play some more!

ZACH
Betcha can't catch us...

They race off. Without hesitation, Artie chases them. They wind up in a laughing, wriggling heap.

Then Artie notices something -- Four is trying to join the play, being restrained by Two and Three.

ARTIE
Hey, could you wait for me a minute?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZACH
Where you goin'?

Artie winks.

ARTIE
Gonna take a whiz.

The kids dissolve in giggles. Artie goes off. Out of sight, he addresses the clones.

ARTIE
Four, cool it. We'll play later. Settle down before the kids see you.

Four cools it. Artie turns ominously on Three.

ARTIE
And as for you...

THREE
(edging away)
Ah... I may have left the water running...

ARTIE
How could you do this?! You scared the hell out of us!

THREE
I didn't mean to. Artie, I'm sorry.

ARTIE
Sorry? Laura called the cops! We've been skulking around like criminals, trying to find you before you got busted.

TWO
Why don't we give him to them? That gets us off the hook.

ARTIE
Not a bad idea.

THREE
Don't you guys get it? I couldn't stand being away from them.. If I can't touch them or laugh with them or wipe their noses, I just...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A tear runs down his cheek. There is silence as Artie and Four sympathize. Even Two seems to understand.

ARTIE
All right. I know. The kids are so important, they can make you kind of crazy sometimes.

The clones, each in his own way, nod assent, pleased that Artie understands.

JENNIFER (O.S.)
Daddy! Why are you taking so long?

ARTIE
Coming, honey!
(to the clones)
I'm going to walk the kids over to Laura's parents' house. I want you to follow in the car. Park out of sight and wait for me, okay?

THE CLONES
Okay. Sure.

They watch as Artie heads back toward the kids, who run to him and jump in his arms.

THREE
Awwww...

Two gives Three the beginning of a censorious look, but the expression gives way to one of tolerance. Surrendering to the overall climate of good feelings, he throws an arm around the other two and they head for the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAURA'S PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

All the lights are on. The kids run up the walk. Laura opens the door and sweeps them into her arms.

LAURA
Oh, Zach! Oh, Jenny! I'm so glad to see you. Are you all right?

JENNIFER
Sure. We had fun. Daddy played with us and everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZACH
Mommy, can I watch TV?

Laura sees Artie. Their eyes meet.

LAURA
No, honey. Kids, I need to talk to your dad a moment. Your grammy has your pajamas ready, so...

She points in the door.

JENNIFER
No. We want to stay out here with you.

ZACH
Yeah. Grammy always wants to kiss us. She smells like my sneakers.

ARTIE
Anyone who goes in right now gets a chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream cone tomorrow...

KIDS
Yayyyyy...!

They run into the house. Artie and Laura look at each other.

LAURA
Bribery?

ARTIE
Works every time.

LAURA
Artie, it's almost eleven. How could you possibly do this? I'm so angry at you.

ARTIE
I'm sorry, honey. I hope you can forgive me. But we were climbing on a turtle and chasing each other around and, I don't know, "time flies when you're having fun."

She looks at him oddly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
You were doing those things?

ARTIE
Sure.

Suddenly, surprisingly, he WALKS ON HIS HANDS. Laura looks at him openmouthed. Artie comes back to his feet and grins.

LAURA
Artie, you're doing it again.

ARTIE
I am?

LAURA
You're acting like someone I don't know. A cute someone, but... who are you? I think you have multiple personality disorder.

It's too close to the truth. Artie changes the subject.

ARTIE
So -- guess what? I quit my job.

LAURA
What??

ARTIE
Well, actually I refused to fire people and got fired myself. But it pissed me off, so I went back and quit.

LAURA
What did Rotweiler say?

ARTIE
He said, "Ugh."

Artie does an impression of Rotweiler's post-punch groan from his office floor.

LAURA
I don't believe this.

She looks at him with new respect.

LAURA
Now what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
Whatever you want.

Laura turns moody again.

LAURA
I don't know what I want. I've been pushing so hard for so long, I've lost sight of me -- who I am.

Artie gets serious. He takes Laura's hand.

ARTIE
Baby, I'm so sorry. I've made so many mistakes, I don't even know where to begin apologizing. I think we both got mired in some sort of war neither of us even understood. Well, here's a unilateral move for you: I surrender. And I don't want to fight ever again.

LAURA
Artie....

He looks at her lovely face framed in the soft glow of the lamplight.

ARTIE
And it's high time I thanked you. For all the sacrifices you've made. For putting up the Christmas decorations, and planning the vacations, and remembering everyone's birthday. For keeping us a family. You're the woman of my dreams. It just took me a long, long time to realize it.

A tear rolls down Laura's cheek.

ARTIE
So... would you maybe want to come home with me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
I don't know. I guess I need some time. To sort things out.
(on Artie's disappointed expression)
But I feel a lot closer to you now than I did five minutes ago.

ARTIE
Really?

LAURA
(nods)
Mm-hm.

She opens her arms and they embrace.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - SAME TIME

The clones, watching all this from inside the car, go crazy cheering.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAURA'S FOLKS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

They release each other.

ARTIE
Boy. Just like when we were dating and I used to drop you off.

She laughs.

LAURA
You weren't allowed in then, either.

ARTIE
Well, call you in the morning.

LAURA
I'll be here.

Artie turns to go, then turns back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE
Uh... how about a date tomorrow night?

LAURA
Okay.

They exchange a smile.

ARTIE
Night.

LAURA
Night.

He heads off.

INT. ARTIE'S CAR - SAME TIME

As Artie gets in, the clones elaborately pretend they haven't been watching.

CLONES
What'd she say? How'd it go?

Artie looks the happiest we've seen him.

ARTIE
I think it's going to be okay.

CLONES
All right! Way to go! Cool!

They give him high fives, slap him on the back, etc. Then...

TWO
Well, so -- the three of us have been talking, and... we're taking off.

ARTIE
Taking off? Where are you going?

FOUR
Disneyland!

THREE
Four, we said maybe.

TWO
Actually, we don't know where we're going.

CONTINUED:

FOUR
But we're going to have fun! I made them promise.

ARTIE
You know, if you keep listening to each other, I think you're going to do okay.

TWO
We'll stay in touch, drop you a card every now and then.

ARTIE
Good, good. I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm going to miss you.

Everyone's kind of tongue-tied.

ALL AT ONCE
Well... so long.

Artie shakes hands with Two, embraces Three, and kisses Four. He gets out of the car.

ARTIE
Good luck!

They drive off, honking and waving. Artie waves back. Then realizes:

ARTIE
Hey! My car!

He starts to run after them, but decides what-the-hey, it's their car, too. He stops running. He's smiling.

THE END